/602 cont./

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frost scarcely leaves the ground" /cited in English/, and that therefore the bone remnants would be better preserved. The greater or lesser presence of air is a much more important factor in preservation.

of freezing and thawing to which these organic structures are exposed more than are other things. All the finds mentioned above unfold the picture of an animal world that still inhabits this region today.

The remains of human skeletons are less often found in these shell strata; occasionally they are uncovered by natural forces themselves. It is well known that the Yamana formerly burned [764] their corpses in their own huts and afterwards buried the bone parts on the spot. It cannot be proved, but it is almost certain that they also buried the entire corpse in a shell mound without first cremating it. Unfortunately only an extremely small number of remains of human skeletons from the shell mounds have been gathered and accurately described scientifically. I know of only two skulls uncovered in the "Conchales de Ushuaia" and described by Vignati (c):131. /603/ He did not examine the corresponding skeletons. Exact measurements were not made of the skulls either, but the descriptions and illustrations leave no doubt that these specimens can definitely be assigned to two members of the Yamana tribe (398).

398. Vignati's (c):138 own opinion is that the characteristics found, "in summary, authorize one to suppose that both craniums are from Yahgans, such as are familiar to us through the descriptions by Flower, Garson, Hultkrantz, etc." /translated from Spanish/.

Judging such remains is more difficult because one can probably never determine definitely whether the find goes back many centuries or only a few decades. The uniform construction of the shell mounds warrants only to a certain extent the inference that the remains more deeply buried are older. Hence the fact that skeletal remains are found somewhere in the lowest strata of a

/1104 cont./

763 that he might strangle the dying one in order to release him from
734 the death agony (p. 944). Loud, shrill cries announce the end to the neighborhood, and people arrive without delay. I myself witnessed the two cases just described.

731 Fatal accidents are not uncommon. A whole family may
766 be taken if a canoe capsizes. A few men drag the body of a person who has drowned or fallen from a rock into his hut if it is not too far away. Otherwise, if the men are far from their families on a cormorant hunt, they bury the victim then and there and hasten to bring the news quickly to the family.

763 The demonstrations of mourning begin while a person is
152 dying and immediately afterwards. All the neighbors assemble in front of the hut of the deceased or inside and start a loud, irregular moaning. Copious tears flow from grief and sincere sympathy. Everyone is again vividly reminded of Watauineiwa who has taken this person away. As was learned earlier from Bridges (a):206: "When a person is very ill and likely to die, great grief is shown, and the near relatives keep near, so as to act as mourners at the decease of the sick. They show much grief, and when the sick actually dies great lamentation is made, and the mourners weep profusely" /cited in English/.

2. The Burial

764 There is a remarkable number of reports, most of them brief,
114 however, about the way our Fuegians treat the corpse. The dying one has scarcely ceased breathing when the persons present busy themselves over him. As Bove (e):159 says, this time accurately: "They wrap the body of the deceased, which is still almost warm in a few rags." They use large pieces of leather and nowadays also scraps of sacking. Usually they leave the body in the position it assumed at death. The entire sheath is fastened and tied with strips of leather which are tightly wrapped around it in various directions (43). This happens in any case; "the dead are always

43. Hyades (q):379 says briefly that "the body is wrapped in some old skins of otter or seal; it is then buried"; Lovisato

/1104 cont./

(b):147 and Dabbene (b):193 say the same.

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184 wrapt up in skins either when buried or burned" /cited in English/, as Bridges (a):206 confirms. Nowadays the /1105/ body is straightened out and the arms are placed at the sides, because burial in the ground is now the exclusive custom. The eyelids are not closed nor is the lower jaw lifted to close the mouth. The face is quickly covered with the shroud used for the entire body which is neither decorated nor ornamented. The corpse of a yékamus, however, is specially treated; at least the face is painted and the customary feather ornament is wound around the forehead.

A few allusions and specific statements by old people leave no doubt that formerly cremation was more common and perhaps even the exclusive custom. This is confirmed by several travelers and missionaries (44). Bridges (MM:III, 119;1869), for example, states in so many words and without any qualification: "The dead are generally burnt to ashes" /cited in English/. It may be that this custom predominated chiefly in individual districts, for quite early Bridges (VP:XI, 259;1864) asserts that in the Wulaia region cremation was "the usual way of disposing of their dead" /cited in English/. It is not correct, however, to say that cremation is restricted to the yékamus (45). Nevertheless a few

44. Only the following will be mentioned: Bove (e):159, Bridges (a):206, (c):332, and (h):209, Despard (b):698, Hyades (f):585, (p):332, and (q):378, Outes (g):56, Spegazzini (a):168, and Spencer:74. Not a single one of these men definitely asserts that he personally witnessed a cremation.

45. Despard (b):698 was the only one to surmise this and gives the following reason: "Possibly to make sure that they may never return to trouble survivors, since in their life-time these practioners have been ever

/1105 cont./

764 114 active in mischief" /cited in English/. In this instance he (VP:VI, 129;1859) relied altogether on the uncertain accounts of J. Button.

older reports admit that both types of interment were simultaneously known and used, for example, Stirling (VSA:XI, 198;1864) and Despard (b):698. At first Bridges (a):206 says: "Adult persons both male and female when they die are burned shortly after by the nearest male relatives, but sometimes (especially the females) are buried. Little children are generally buried when they die" /cited in English/. Later he writes: "Usually they bury their dead, but often they are burned." I know of no other place where it is said that they differentiated between adults on the basis of sex for cremation; in fact, local conditions were decisive for both sexes alike. Outes (g):56 made a certain qualification which in this general form is surely unjustified. He says: "If the death came about as the result of a fight or murder, the corpse is generally not burned, but is abandoned" /translated from Spanish/. Finally Hyades (f):585 tried to find out "in what situation they preferred cremation. They often told me that their practice was always to burn the bones of interred natives after they had been buried a certain time, but surely cremation is sometimes swifter..." /translated from French/. These words even indicate interment twice, for which there is absolutely no certain proof. Most of my aged /1106/ informants had experienced actual cremations. Under the influence of missionaries and [177] European settlers this custom quickly had to give way to burial, which has been done exclusively for the last few decades. During the years when Bove (e):159 was transversing the south the following was still applicable: "Formerly the dead were burned, but nowadays this rarely occurs." According to my investigations, cremation was not the exclusive custom in olden times, but it was universal and predominant.

764 Not one of the authors mentioned above has described the procedure of burning a corpse. I, too, must rely on the accounts of my Indians who gave me the following description. The corpse, which is wrapped in a large piece of leather and tightly

/1106 cont./

764 bound with cord, is dragged out of the hut by a few men from among the close relatives. They take it to the nearest thicket or into the nearby woods. Here they lay it on a low bushy shrub with spreading branches. Smoldering sticks are pushed into the shrub and dry logs leaned against it. They fan it rapidly with leafy twigs, and in a few minutes the flames leap up. Usually after a short time the burned bush collapses. Then the burning corpse is covered with greater quantities of wood. The men alone do this first part, while the girls and women are obliged to fetch firewood incessantly and to keep the fire burning brightly until all the bones have been destroyed beyond recognition. Coarse sand or earth from the forest floor is dragged to the place with sticks or oars and scattered over the remaining small heap of ashes of the extinguished pyre. Finally the spot is covered with brush and fallen branches. After a few months it no longer is discernible. While this is going on, other people from the neighboring huts stand around the fire, watch the procedure, weep loudly, and sing their tálawaia. A cremation does not take place on the open beach because the traces of it could not be quickly and completely eradicated. The corpse was laid upon a strong, thick shrub because igniting it is much easier than kindling a fire on the ever-damp forest floor.

766 Even in regions where cremation was preferred over burial, the body of a child was customarily buried in the ground. I was told: One man alone took this corpse and carried it into the forest where he quickly made a shallow hole in the ground and covered the body with earth and brush. This work was easy and not troublesome; the grave only required scratching away a bit of loose forest earth with a stick. Bridges (MM:III, 119;1869) also emphasizes that, in contrast to the burning of adult bodies, "young children are frequently buried" /cited in English/.

764 At all such cremations it was an absolute rule that the mourners left the spot only after the large bones of the corpse /1107/ had crumbled to fine dust in the strong heat and the scene of the fire had been made unrecognizable. They continued their weeping in the huts until far into the night. It is noteworthy, and contrary to the general conception of the Yamana, that every man

[431] and woman who helped in any way at the cremation received a gift from the relatives of the deceased. This was by no means something that had belonged to the deceased, as a memento, for

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764 [431]

example; rather, the relatives themselves gave something that must be regarded as recompense for work performed and as a token of the gratitude of the survivors for this service of love. The strong incentive that led our Fuegians to burn the corpse of every adult was the fear that animals, especially rats, otters, dogs, and foxes, would devour it or gnaw at it (46). The thought of the

> 46. There is no basis for the fear that "strangers to the tribe" might "make harpoon points out of the bones," as Krickeberg:322 maintains.

disgusting habits of those animals made them shudder, and they wanted to make sure that the bodies would not be desecrated. Other reasons mentioned by one traveler or another are not valid. Hyades (p):332, for example, writes: "Sometimes [the dead] are burned, especially when death has taken place far from the habitual residence of the family" /translated from French/.

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The following reports must also be clarified. On March 9, 1864, Stirling (VSA:XI, 198;1864) landed with his company on Isla Button. He sums up in the following words what he observed there: "Here is the funeral pyre on which the body of one of Macooallan's brothers was recently burned. Here the wigwam, or framework of branches, where for a day the body lay in state. The body of James Button [who had died shortly before] has not yet been burned: it is merely interred. The return of his brother from Keppel Island has been waited for, and now the remains will be submitted to the flames. This information is given to us in a subdued voice by Oolokkko [who took part in this round trip]" /cited in English/. Hyades (c):142 generalizes this assertion (47).

> 47. He says: "The Fuegians do not have a funeral rite; they inter the body near their dwelling at a shallow depth and later burn the bones" /translated from French/.

One might deduce from these words that after a temporary burial the body is taken out of the grave and burned. This surmise is completely erroneous and neither Stirling nor Hyades was reliably

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informed. The simple fact is that any human bones which have in any way become exposed after burial are consigned to the fire for complete decomposition. Spencer:74 may well appear as a witness for the cremation of bodies, but he is mistaken in his reasoning: "Old woman says that in olden times bodies were burned, which agrees with remnants of large fires met with in deeper parts of old middens, three and four and five feet down, where also are no shells, or very few, and only calcined light-coloured earth" /cited in English/. The ashes in the lowest layers of the shell mounds are known to be remnants of hut fires which, of course, only later were /1108/ built on a layer of mussel shells (p.356). This does not contradict the fact that some corpses were buried in shell mounds.

Besides the burning of the bodies of adults in ancient times, burial in the ground was also customary, at least for children and possibly also now and then for adults. Fitz-Roy (a):181 credits all the water nomads of the Fireland Archipelago with it (48) and

> 48. He asserts: "When a person dies, his family wrap the body in skins, and carry it a long way into the woods; there they place it upon broken boughs, or pieces of solid wood, and then pile a great quantity of branches over the corpse" /cited in English/.

there is also no lack of witnesses for it from more recent times. Lovisato (b):148 certainly deserves assent when he says that "the burial of corpses in that tribe dates from the time of the Ushuaia Mission" /translated from Italian/, in contrast to cremation as a "custom also practiced today by some, but very rarely, and doggedly combatted by the missionaries" /translated from Italian/. Actually, with the coming of Europeans, cremation, which formerly was almost universal, gave way to burial in the ground exclusively. It is inaccurate to maintain that the Indians traveled to certain places solely for this purpose. According to Bridges (a):206, to whom Lovisato (b):147 refers, "small islands are preferred for burying-places, as there are no foxes to disturb the dead... Sometimes also the dead are buried at the foot of cliffs among the rocks,

/1108 cont./

764 in places safe from foxes" /cited in English/. The Yamana would
114 not take so much trouble; they customarily bury a corpse not far from the hut.

764 Soon after death the body is wrapped in pieces of leather or in strong scraps of leather and bound with long leather strips. Only occasionally is it placed on short poles which are also enclosed in the wrapping, the body being stretched out in this case. Several men who offer their services are occupied with all this for about an hour, while the rest of the people present sigh and weep. Then they lift up the body, each one putting his arm over it and pressing it against his hip, and carry it to the place agreed upon. According to my personal observation, four men arrange themselves around the corpse, two on either side. A few decades ago they chose a large shell mound. It is easy to dig a rather large hole in it with poles and oars, and the hole can be quickly and easily covered again. In recent times our Indians prefer to bury the corpse in a sandbank lying off the shore or in a low hill of coarse gravel. It is regularly laid in position on its back (49), which is

49. Only Spencer:62 maintains that the corpse is "always buried lying on back with head towards west" /cited in English/. There is no proof for this.

easy to arrange and maintain, and then covered with earth and gravel or with the mixture of sand and mussel shells. Now and then they insert a few short branches. They put a great many large stones over it to prevent dogs or predatory animals from getting at the body. If an animal should nevertheless succeed in doing so, /1109/ it is immediately killed, for the Yamana have a great aversion to seeing a corpse uncovered. Finally the spot is made to look exactly like the surroundings so as to be unrecognizable (50). Anyone

50. Hyades (g):33 has described the procedure of a burial somewhat more elaborately (cf. also Anuario Hidrográfico de la Marina de Chile, Vol. XI, p. 506; Santiago, 1888). It is briefly mentioned by Lovisato (b):147, Despard (b):698, Bridges (a):206, (h):209, and Spegazzini (a):168.

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764 who knows about it avoids it out of anxious fear. Other people, not the nearest relatives, accompany or assist the men who bury the corpse. When they have finished their work, they quietly and unobtrusively rejoin those who have gathered in a hut and are loudly mourning.

766 As has been said, as soon as death occurs, immediate preparations for burial are made unless one must await the coming dawn because of the darkness of the night. In exceptional cases the body is interred in a small cave nearby or in the cavity of a rock if there is earth or gravel available to cover it. Even in our day the corpse has been destroyed in the hut fire. If, for instance, a married couple were all alone in some spot and the husband died, and other people, although notified by the customary triple smoke signal, could not get there quickly because of high waves, the surviving wife would be obliged to make the best of it. Without any special preparation of the corpse, she would drag it into the hut fire and pile brush and firewood on top of it. Soon the flames would leap so high that the hut itself would catch fire. The woman would keep the fire going until the corpse was completely destroyed. The same thing was done if the path into the forest was blocked or the customary burial in the ground was in any way prevented. The concern of the survivors is always to do away with the corpse without delay, and even a person by himself is able to do that.

764 768 Among the Yamana, just as among the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 552), it has been customary from ancient times to destroy all the possessions of the deceased, by consigning them to the flames, throwing them into the sea, or placing the individual pieces in the grave with the corpse. Bridges (a):206 confirms that the deceased's "property is either cast into the sea or burned" /cited in English/, and Bove (e):159 adds: "In the grave of a man, they bury pieces of harpoons, spears, slings, etc., and with a woman, nets and fishing gear." These things are in no way meant as actual burial accessories; the survivors are guided solely by the desire to destroy in one way or another everything that belonged to the deceased. That is why it is a matter of course for them "to burn the hut of the deceased, which was his last abode, and to leave the area for some time," to repeat Bove's (e):159 words.

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> was ended by a low growling noise. By this, as well as by pulling their hair, and beating their breasts, while tears streamed down their faces, they evinced their sorrow for the fate of some friends who had perished, some days before the 'Beagle''s arrival, by the upsetting of a loaded canoe" /cited in English/.

152 Parents in particular /1112/ lose control of themselves and make loud and bitter accusations against Watauinéwa, insult him, and swear revenge against him (p. 988). Sorrow breaks through unrestrained among these unspoiled children of nature. The first utterance always exceeds all bounds, but the grief continues to be deeply felt for months and years and sometimes flares up in its initial violence. "The mourning lasts long, sometimes for two years, but it gradually becomes less, till the memory of the dead passes from the mind" /cited in English/ (Bridges [a] :206).

● 144 152 While the dying person is still struggling with death, his nearest relatives are already weeping and howling. The strongest outburst of their grief begins after life has departed. Loud, shrill cries are uttered at short intervals, and it seems as though each one is intended to surpass the other. Mixed in with them are unrestrained howling and groaning by other persons. A loud and indescribable confusion of voices fills the little hut. The longer it lasts, the more neighbors hasten there, and none stays away. Everyone squats on the ground, and sometimes they sit pressed so closely together that they can scarcely move. Once I even saw them remove the hut fire because of lack of room. Everyone present wants to be as close to the body as possible, at least to be inside the hut. Long hours are filled with whimpering and sighing, howling and lamenting. While this is going on, a few men begin wrapping the corpse in pieces of leather. While it is being dragged out of the hut, the howling reaches its loudest and wildest pitch. The behavior of the persons present clearly shows their feeling that the deceased is now departing forever. They writhe with pain, throw themselves on the ground and get up again, wave their arms about wildly and full of despair, and clutch one another as though they would tear each other apart. This continues

/1112 cont./

764 152 for hours with tireless persistence, although the loud lamentations increase and diminish. Meanwhile the corpse has been buried. If it is burned, the howling and crying does not by any means cease while this is going on.

No matter how the corpse has been removed, it is only under /1113/ the compulsion of complete exhaustion that the neighbors who are not close to the deceased inconspicuously leave. After the hut of the dead person has been destroyed by fire, his nearest relatives crowd in elsewhere. Here they continue their lamentation for many more hours, heedless of the night which has perhaps long since fallen. This stimulates the neighbors to resume their cries of lament. For at least 20 hours after the soul's departure there is never an interval of complete quiet; the greater or lesser tumult of voices continues without pause. Even on the second and third day those who are nearest to the deceased barely interrupt their howling now and then for brief pauses, and the other people often fall in with them for two or three hours. All this depends on the disposition of the individual and on a number of incalculable motives. Almost all the adults become quite perceptibly exhausted. As though crushed, as though overwhelmed by grief, everyone remains in his hut almost without interruption. Now and then a person goes to those who have been directly affected by the misfortune, remains near them at least two hours, and weeps with them, as is demanded by sympathetic concern, according to the ideas of our Fuegians. Out of the same consideration everyone must remain still and quiet, even at a considerable distance from the mourning family. Even children may not talk loudly or laugh.

765 152 For the first few days after a death has occurred all is very quiet in the entire camp. It was simply impossible for me to get people in front of the phonograph and the camera during this brief period. They rejected all my urging, which they interpreted as a violation of their innermost feelings, with the decisive words: "We are now in mourning!" Thus they told me, curtly and clearly, that they were simply unavailable for other matters.

765 282 The custom of announcing a death without delay by means of signal fires has been discussed (p.333). Three thick clouds of smoke are sent up close together, which are chiefly meant to call other families to come quickly and help the family that has been

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

756 cials witnessed by Rev. Thomas Bridges (1893, p. 238) may have been part of this training.

756 887 Graduation from the shaman school did not insure a successful professional career, for only by repeated proofs of power could the individual's reputation be established. It seems that there was much competition among the medicine-men, and several early observers note a tendency of almost all the older people to work cures, to prophesy, etc.

FIG. 94.—Yahgan shaman's bag. Diameter, 11 in. (14/2337)

756 445 In fig. 94 is illustrated the guanaco-hide bag in which the shaman carried his impedimenta. The contents were diadems of heron-plumes and of kelp-goose down, and white paint. To these doubtless should be added a number of small hard objects to be shown to the sick as the cause of their pain.

DEATH

764 When death took place the corpse was wrapped in old seal-skins and buried outside of the house within twenty-four hours. If the ground were frozen, the corpse might be covered with stones and shrubs to keep off dogs and foxes, or it might be buried in a cave or on a small island. Hyades (1891, p. 379) says that when death occurred far from home the body was carried into the woods and cremated. This was done that the bones might not fall into the hands of enemies and be made into harpoon-points.

765 For mourning the family of the defunct covered themselves with